

## 1: The Mishnah: A NEW INTEGRATED TRANSLATION AND COMMENTARY Based on Rabbeinu Ovadia

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The term "mishnah" is used in a number of different ways see below , but when used as a proper noun "the Mishnah" it designates the collection of rabbinic traditions redacted by Rabbi Judah ha-Nasi usually called simply "Rabbi" at the beginning of the third century CE. The Mishnah supplements, complements, clarifies and systematizes the commandments of the Torah. The Torah, for example, commands: The Mishnah provides this abstract commandment with a concrete form – the kiddush and havdalah rituals which mark the beginning and the ending of the Sabbath day. The Torah commands "Observe the Sabbath day" Deut. The Mishnah specifies 39 categories of forbidden labor which are prohibited by this commandment, subsuming dozens of other kinds of labor under these 39 headings. The Mishnah spells out specific blessings to be recited before and after each kind of food, and what to do if the wrong blessing is recited by mistake. It also extends the recitation of blessings to areas other than food, detailing blessings to be recited before and after the performance of commandments, blessings of praise and thanksgiving, even establishing a regular order of daily prayers. When the commandments seem chaotic or inconsistent, as in Lev. When they are already relatively detailed and systematic, as in Lev. This process began long before the redaction of the Mishnah, and continued throughout the talmudic period 1st to 6th centuries CE and beyond. Nevertheless, the Mishnah has a unique place within the rabbinic tradition. Through these works the Mishnah has shaped most of the actual practice of the Jewish religion down to the present day. In the post-talmudic period commentaries were composed to the Mishnah, and together with them the Mishnah came to serve as the authoritative epitome of the talmudic tradition as a whole. In these two roles – as the foundation underlying the talmudic tradition and as the authoritative epitome of that tradition – the Mishnah has played a decisive role in the religious life of the Jewish people. We will then discuss the sources of the Mishnah, its redaction, and its dissemination and acceptance in the later talmudic academies. After a discussion of the contributions of traditional and academic scholarship to the understanding of the Mishnah, we will provide a brief survey of editions, translations, and other aids to Mishnah study. The Mishnah as a Literary Work Originally the term "mishnah" designated the entire content of traditional Torah study, with the exclusion of the 24 books of the Hebrew Bible – "mikra" in Hebrew. In midrash, rabbinic tradition is intimately interconnected with the explication of the biblical text, and the overall literary structure of midrashic compilations follows the order of the biblical text. Halakhot contain the same rabbinic material as is found in the midrash, but without any reference to the biblical text. In the halakhot, rabbinic tradition stands on its own, the structure and order of halakhic compilations being determined solely by the content of rabbinic tradition itself. Only two halakhic compilations have come down to us from the earliest period of rabbinic literature: Both of these works are divided into six sedarim sing. These six sedarim are further subdivided into tractates masekhtot, sing. The further subdivision of chapters into smaller groups of halakhot varies from edition to edition and does not seem to be original. A tractate with a larger number of chapters comes first, followed by tractates with fewer chapters. If a seder contains more than one tractate with the same number of chapters, their order may vary between different manuscripts and editions. In the past, chapters of the Mishnah were referenced by the opening words of their first halakhah. Today references are made to tractates by name, and to chapter and individual halakhah by number, according to the accepted division of the most recent editions. The redaction and dissemination of the Mishnah in the early third century marked a turning point in the history of rabbinic literature. As a result, talmudic literature is divided into two periods – the earlier, tannaitic period and the later, amoraic period. The tannaitic literature consists primarily of the Mishnah, the Tosefta, and tannaitic midrashim – Sifra, Sifre, and Mekhilta, etc. Finally, the individual unit of tannaitic tradition was called "a mishnah" pl. The baraitot were preserved not only in the Tosefta, but were also included in and transmitted as part of the amoraic tradition in the two Talmudim. It is also used to refer to individual units of tradition,

irrespective of their authoritative status Avot 6: These traditions may involve no more than the simple restatement or brief elaboration of some custom or practice. But by far the most characteristic tendency of the individual tannaitic halakhah is the close examination of some dimension of ordinary human life or experience, and the careful categorization of certain aspects of that experience in line with a limited number of formal dichotomies. The most obvious "and familiar" halakhic dichotomy is the one between "forbidden" *asur* and "permitted" *mutar*. This dichotomy is most regularly applied to human behavior. For example, the Mishnah may categorize sexual relations between two individuals under certain circumstances as permitted, and under other circumstances as forbidden. While eating on the Day of Atonement is certainly forbidden, tannaitic halakhah lists certain exceptions to this rule and even requires children under a certain age to eat. Similarly, the halakhah permits heating food on the Sabbath under certain circumstances and forbids it under other circumstances. This dichotomy is generally applicable to actions which have already been categorized as forbidden. For example, tannaitic halakhah forbids the carrying of an object in the public domain on the Sabbath. In order for the transgressor to be considered "liable" for sanctions, however, the act of carrying must conform to a number of different conditions. If any one of these conditions is not met, the transgressor is considered "exempt" from sanctions. Similarly, the halakhah forbids baking bread on a holiday for use the following day. One who transgresses this rule is, however, not necessarily liable for punishment. It is forbidden to steal. Under certain circumstances the thief will be liable to pay double indemnity, while under other circumstances he will be exempt from this additional payment. Although a person can be liable for the indirect or inadvertent consequences of his or her actions or inaction, it is not always possible to categorize these actions as forbidden. When prepared improperly, the Mishnah states: Halakhic categorizations are, however, by no means limited to the field of human behavior. The Torah itself designated certain days as "holy" *kodesh*, during which various forms of activity are forbidden. It also designated certain places as holy, such as the Temple and walled cities, from which various kinds of impurity must be excluded. The holiest times were defined by the most rigorous and most comprehensive set of prohibitions, and lesser degrees of holiness by more lenient and less comprehensive sets of prohibitions. Similarly, the Mishnah defines ten ascending levels of holy space *Kel*. The most highly developed area of tannaitic halakhah is to be found in its system of ritual purity. *Seder Toharot* applies the dichotomy between ritually pure *tahor* and ritually impure *amei* to virtually every aspect of ordinary life. These terms can signify either that an object is susceptible to becoming impure, or that it is actually impure and capable of transmitting this impurity to something else. Certain tractates define the purity or impurity of tools, garments, vessels, and places of residence. Others define the purity or impurity of foods and drinks. Others categorize certain individuals as themselves being sources of ritual impurity, and other individuals as impure as a result of contact with other sources of ritual impurity. This area of halakhah seems to have played a decisive role in the life of the tannaitic sages, even among non-priestly families, and with no obvious connection to the Temple see Alon. This example of *Toharot* should serve as a warning against viewing tannaitic halakhah as a legal system consisting entirely of formal obligations enforceable by earthly courts. While true in part, other aspects of tannaitic halakhah could be more accurately described as a moral or a spiritual discipline which the initiate freely accepts in order to draw closer to the ideal of divine service. *Aggadah* in the Mishnah The other primary component of the Mishnah is the *aggadah*. This term is notoriously difficult to define, and it has become the custom among scholars to define *aggadah* by means of negation "as the non-halakhic component of rabbinic tradition" Frankel, *Midrash and Aggadah*. While fair enough, we must be careful in adopting this approach not to define halakhah itself too narrowly. As we have seen, the halakhah of the Mishnah can be described in part as a system of laws, but not infrequently it also has the character of a personal moral and spiritual discipline. It can be expressed in the form of concrete judgments about specific cases, but also in rules involving varying degrees of abstraction and generality. The Mishnah may even use stories to express a halakhah. This is obviously so when the story reports an explicit legal precedent. But it may also be true when a story merely describes the behavior of a notable sage, if it is understood that this behavior is worthy of imitation. Despite these differences in form, the rules, judgments and precedents included in the Mishnah all have one thing in common. They all categorize specific forms of behavior and well defined areas of concrete experience in line

with formal dichotomies of the sort described in the previous section. Aggadah, on the other hand, investigates and interprets the meaning, the values, and the ideas which underlie the concrete forms of religious life as opposed to the specific rules which actually govern that life. Starting from the last distinction, it is clear that the Mishnah makes extraordinary demands upon the external behavior of the sages and their disciples. Along with these external demands, the Mishnah makes equally extraordinary "internal" demands on the character, the faith, and the understanding of the sages and their disciples. The Mishnah contains a tractate devoted in its entirety to these principles of character, faith, divine providence, justice, etc. Moreover, the Mishnah introduces related aggadic elements into the context of specific halakhic discussions. After defining the specific sums one is obligated to pay in restitution for assault, the Mishnah declares that "one is not absolved [of the sin] until one asks [the victim for forgiveness]" BK 8: The Mishnah then goes on to state that the victim "should not be cruel" but rather should be merciful and forgiving. It is in this sense that we should understand the programmatic statement concerning the nature and the purpose of the aggadah, found in the tannaitic midrash, Sifre Deut. The aggadah of the Mishnah also deals with classic theological issues such as divine providence, theodicy and the afterlife. These issues, however, are regularly integrated into some appropriate halakhic context. For example, one of the most highly developed aggadic themes running throughout tannaitic literature is the doctrine of "measure for measure. The tannaitic literature develops it into a general theory of divine justice. More specifically, it is used to explain and to justify the details of divine retribution as described in various biblical passages. One of these passages concerns the sotah, a wife suspected of unfaithfulness Num. In the following two mishnayot, the Mishnah summarizes the entire tannaitic doctrine of measure for measure, not only with regard to divine retribution, but also with regard to divine reward. Another prominent aggadic theme is that of the afterlife the "portion in the world to come. It also fits the immediate context, coming immediately after a dispute 9: By a recent count there are more than 50 such aggadic passages in the Mishnah, not including Avot and those found at the ends of tractates or sub-divisions of tractates which are generally viewed as later scribal additions, and not as integral parts of the text of the Mishnah Frankel, *The Aggadah in the Mishnah*, While preliminary conclusions may be drawn concerning this phenomenon as a whole, there is still much room for detailed analysis of each individual case in its own particular halakhic context. Finally, we should mention that, despite its overall literary character, the Mishnah does contain a number of midrashic passages. With regard to their content, these passages are quite unexceptional, and reflect the same kind of halakhic and aggadic content found in the overwhelming majority of non-midrashic mishnah traditions. They differ only with regard to their external form. This phenomenon has been addressed with regard to the question of possible literary dependence between the extant tannaitic halakhic and midrashic works Melamed; Friedman, *Tosefta Atiqta*,

## 2: What is the Mishnah?

*Commentary on the Mishnah* Maimonides composed his Mishnah commentary between the ages of twenty-three and thirty, between the years and The original title of the commentary was "the Book of the Lamp" "Kitab al-Siraj" in Arabic, occasionally designated as "Sefer Ha-Ma'or" in Hebrew.

Maimonides wrote both the introduction and the commentary themselves in the Arabic language of Jews in North Africa and Egypt. Although the language of the text was Arabic, it was written with the characters of the Hebrew alphabet. Maimonides also included vowel points to accompany the twenty-two consonants of the Hebrew alphabet. The text was thereby accessible to Jews who spoke Arabic although they only had a rudimentary Jewish education. According to my estimate, his Introduction contains no less than 16, Hebrew words. Printers of traditional texts occasionally begin paragraphs with larger, bold font. However, I have yet to discern any system for these divisions. For the sake of a table of contents and synopses, Rabinowitz inobtrusively divides the Introduction into eleven sections. He writes a synopsis for each of these sections. Lampel calls these sections "chapters. These notes themselves fill another 52 pages. On the other hand, Rosner begins with 60 pages of his own introduction, whereas Lampel only adds 9 pages. Authors of Torah texts often introduce their compositions with a Scriptural verse as an epigraph. The verse is like a rubric for the entire book or essay that follows. Section a Know - Faith or belief is not sufficient. Knowledge is impelled by faith, though. One who does not believe is unlikely to try to learn even the subject of this first sentence. G-dliness is the definition of and standard for holiness. The world is endowed with potential holiness which is revealed by human beings through their activities. It was finally completed by his disciples and all the Sages seventy-three years after his death [ CE]," the sealing of the text Lampel, pp. Rav Ashi was helped in this work of compiling the studies of all the Torah academies of Babylonia by his uncle Ravina Lampel, p. The printed texts of the Talmud that we have are as accurate as humanly possible. They accurately reflect the text of the published manuscripts from the end of the sixth century ce. The year is about years after the destruction of Holy Temple in Jerusalem. At the same time, the Kabbalistic Fellowship in Safed, Israel, was at its most productive stage of development. As a young man, Maimonides composed, in the Arabic of the Jews around him, an explanation of the Mishnah which, translated into Hebrew, is appended today to most copies of the Talmud. He writes that he began to compose the explanation when he was twenty-three years old and finished it in Egypt when he was thirty. His father was a judge for the Jewish law court and a community leader. The family was uprooted when Maimonides was thirteen years old. A fanatical Muslim sect had invaded the Iberian peninsula, persecuting Jews. Jews were faced with conversion or the sword. Mossad HaRav Kook Publishing, Hebrew " Newly Typeset.

## 3: Mishnah - Wikipedia

*The Mishnah or Mishna (/ ˈmɪʃə ˈnɪʃnə /; Hebrew: מִשְׁנָה, "study by repetition", from the verb shanah שׁוֹן שׁוֹן, "to study and review", also "secondary") is the first major written collection of the Jewish oral traditions known as the "Oral Torah".*

Subscribe to the CompellingTruth. What is the Mishnah? When Moses was on Mt. Sinai, God gave him the law He wished the Israelites to follow. The Oral Law, they say, contains explanations of the written law that clarify and detail the sometimes confusing Torah. This Oral Law was supposedly passed down from generation to generation verbally. Around AD 200, in fear that the Jewish diaspora would leave some communities without access to the Oral Torah, Rabbi Judah the Patriarch took on the task of writing these guidelines in the form of the Mishnah. Now all synagogues would have access to the complete Oral Law. After the writing of the Mishnah, Jewish scholars continued to add to the commentaries on both the Tanakh and the Mishnah; in the 5th Century, the extra writings were compiled into the Gemara. The Mishnah and the Gemara together are called the Talmud. To make matters even more confusing, the Gemara has been added to since its original compilation, and the Gemara plus these additions are often referred to as "the Talmud" without the inclusion of the Mishnah. The Mishnah is comprised of six sections which apply to different parts of the Law: The Sabbath, feast days; Nashim "women": Tort, financial, and criminal law; Kodashim "holy things": Sacrifices, excommunication; Toharot "purities": Ritual purity and impurity including medical issues. The acceptance of the Mishnah varies. Conservative and Reform Jews consider the teachings of the Mishnah, but take the freedom to make their own conclusions. It was the extra rules that the Pharisees used to bind the people to legalism. And it was what Jesus fought against when He healed on the Sabbath. The Sadducees had their own, more literal, interpretation of the Torah, and the Essenes mostly rejected the Oral Law. Is the Mishnah from God? Some of it, perhaps. More likely, the Oral Law is comprised of clarifications and practical considerations made by priests or teachers and passed down until they carried an authority second only to the actual Mosaic Law. The Mishnah may also include cultural details that would have been obvious to Moses but were in danger of being misinterpreted. Either way, the Mishnah cannot be considered inspired Scripture as even Rabbi Judah made changes to it some contradictory as he grew older, as have other teachers throughout the last two-thousand years.

## 4: Rabbinic literature - Wikipedia

*Type: Commentary Maimonides' Commentary to the Mishnah Title. The original title of the commentary was "the Book of the Lamp" "Kitab al-Siraj" in Arabic, occasionally designated as "Sefer Ha-Ma'or" in Hebrew. Dates The author lived from to*

The commentaries on the Talmud constitute only a small part of halakic literature in comparison with the responsa literature and the commentaries on the codices. At the time when the Talmud was concluded the traditional literature was still so fresh in the memory of scholars that there was no need of writing Talmudic commentaries, nor were such works undertaken in the first period of the gaonate. According to the Karaite Solomon b. Jeroham, a commentary on Yerushalmi by Ephraim b. The last three great geonim, Sherira, Hai, and Samuel b. In the eleventh century commentaries on the Talmud were composed not only in Babylon but also in Africa, Spain, and Germany. In the first half of that century Nissim b. The work of Hananeel b. He sums up the Talmudic discussions, perhaps in order to facilitate the halakic decision, devoting his attention principally to determining the correct text of the Talmud. According to a not entirely authenticated statement ib. In Germany, Gershom b. Judah engaged in similar labors, though his commentaries have come to light only in the last century: Although Rashi drew upon all his predecessors, yet his originality in using the material offered by them has always been admired. The tosafot included in the present editions are taken from various collections. There are tosafot of Sens, tosafot of Evreux, tosafot of Touques, etc. Instead of the simple, strictly logical method of exegesis a dialectic method showing great acumen is frequently employed in the tosafot. Originating in the German and French schools, and thence adopted by the Spanish and Arabic, it found in the following centuries 13th to 15th brilliant representatives in Moses b. In the sixteenth century the hair-splitting dialectic study of the Talmud known as the Pilpul came to the fore. It is frequently intimated in subsequent pilpulistic works that the author himself regards his expositions as artificial, though he believes them to contain a grain of truth. This method still dominates to some extent the study of the Talmud in the eastern countries of Europe. But Jewish science demands a scientific treatment of the Talmud—“an examination of its sources and parallel passages from a historical, archeological, and philological point of view, a methodical analysis of its text, and a comparative study of it by the side of other monuments of antiquity. The first connected commentary on many treatises of Yerushalmi was composed in the seventeenth century by R. Joshua Benveniste, who had at hand R. Noteworthy as commentators in the nineteenth century are Nahum Trebitsch and Zacharias Frankel. The commentaries on Babli may be divided into: In the subjoined list only the edited commentaries are enumerated, no note being taken of treatises on which there are no commentaries. Goldenthal, Vienna, ; in W. Isaac Rashi , commentary on thirty treatises; in all editions. Twelfth to Fifteenth Century. Nathan, commentary on Makkot; in all editions, beginning with 19b. Nathan, commentary on Nazir; in W. Judah Sir Leon d. Samson of Sens, tosafot Shab. Moses of Evreux, tosafot Ber. Isaiah di Trani c. Zarah, in , ib.

### 5: What is the Midrash? - torah mishnah and talmud g-d's wisdom

*Read Mishnah, Commentary, Rambam texts online with commentaries and connections.*

What is the Mishnah? What is a midrash? The Mishnah was collected and committed to writing about AD and forms part of the Talmud. A particular teaching within the Mishnah is called a midrash. However, they also believe that God gave Moses explanations and examples of how to interpret the Law that Moses did not write down. These unwritten explanations are known in Judaism as the Oral Torah. The two main sections of the Oral Torah are the Mishnah and the Gemara. From AD 400, additional commentaries on the Mishnah were compiled and put together as the Gemara. Actually, there are two different versions of the Gemara, one compiled by scholars in Israel c. AD 400 and the other by the scholars of Babylonia c. 500. Together, the Mishnah and the Gemara form the Talmud. Since there are two different Gemaras, there are two different Talmuds: The Talmud can be thought of as rabbinical commentaries on the Hebrew Scriptures, just like there are commentaries written on the Bible from a Christian perspective. In Judaism the Talmud is just as important as the Hebrew Bible. It is used to explain the laws that may not be clear in Scripture. For example, Deuteronomy 21:18-21. The Scripture only mentions gluttony and drunkenness. Are there other behaviors that would be classified as rebellious? What if only one parent thinks the son rebellious? How old does a son have to be to be held accountable for his rebellion? There are many questions that are not directly addressed in the Law, and so the rabbis turn to the Oral Law. The midrash on Deuteronomy 21:18-21. The Talmud also states that in order to be considered rebellious the son must be old enough to grow a beard. A second type of writings in the Talmud is called the Aggadah also spelled Haggadah. Aggadah are not considered law halakha but literature that consists of wisdom and teachings, stories, and parables. The Aggadah are sometimes used with halakha to teach a principle or make a legal point. For example, one Aggadah tells the story of baby Moses being held by Pharaoh at a banquet. She tells her father to place the baby on the ground with both the crown and some hot coals. If the baby Moses takes the crown, he is guilty; but if he takes the hot coals, he is innocent. There are many Aggadah in the Talmud that are prophetic about the Messiah. One such is the story of the White Ram. It is said that God created a pure White Ram in the Garden of Eden and told him to wait there until God called for him. The White Ram waited until Abraham agreed to sacrifice his son of promise, Isaac. The White Ram, created before the foundations of the earth, was slain, and this anecdote presents a picture of our Messiah as the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world 1 Peter 1:19. The White Ram willingly laid down his life for Isaac. Different sects of Judaism have different views on the Talmud. Reform and Conservative sects believe they can interpret the Talmud as written by rabbis but are not necessarily required to follow it. Karaite Jews do not follow the Talmud or rabbinic teachings at all but only the Hebrew Bible. While Christians can certainly study the Talmud for background information, we should not take it as inspired Scripture.

**6: Mishnah, Commentary, Rambam | Sefaria**

*Rashi's commentary on the Talmud covers the Mishnah (only in those treatises where there is Gemara) and the Gemara. In the various editions, Rashi is assumed to include all the treatises of the Talmud, with the exception of Makkot from 19b to [the] end, Baba Batra from 29b to [the] end, and Nedarim from 22b to [the] end.*

Structure[ edit ] The term "Mishnah" originally referred to a method of teaching by presenting topics in a systematic order, as contrasted with Midrash , which followed the order of the Bible. As a written compilation, the order of the Mishnah is by subject matter and includes a much broader selection of halakhic subjects, and discusses individual subjects more thoroughly, than the Midrash. Each masechet is divided into chapters peraqim, singular pereq and then paragraphs mishnayot, singular mishnah. In this last context, the word mishnah means a single paragraph of the work, i. The six orders are: Zeraim "Seeds" , dealing with prayer and blessings, tithes and agricultural laws 11 tractates Moed "Festival" , pertaining to the laws of the Sabbath and the Festivals 12 tractates Nashim "Women" , concerning marriage and divorce, some forms of oaths and the laws of the nazirite 7 tractates Nezikin "Damages" , dealing with civil and criminal law, the functioning of the courts and oaths 10 tractates Kodashim "Holy things" , regarding sacrificial rites, the Temple , and the dietary laws 11 tractates and Tohorot "Purities" , pertaining to the laws of purity and impurity, including the impurity of the dead, the laws of food purity and bodily purity 12 tractates. In each order with the exception of Zeraim , tractates are arranged from biggest in number of chapters to smallest. Hillel the Elder organized them into six orders to make it easier to remember. The historical accuracy of this tradition is disputed. It is not known whether this is a reference to the Mishnah, but there is a case for saying that the Mishnah does consist of 60 tractates. The current total is 63, but Makkot was originally part of Sanhedrin , and Bava Kamma , Bava Metzia and Bava Batra may be regarded as subdivisions of a single tractate Nezikin. Reuvein Margolies ‏ posited that there were originally seven orders of Mishnah, citing a Gaonic tradition on the existence of a seventh order containing the laws of Sta"m scribal practice and Berachot blessings. These include the laws of tzitzit , tefillin phylacteries , mezuzot , the holiday of Hanukkah , and the laws of conversion to Judaism. These were later discussed in the minor tractates. Margolies suggests that as the Mishnah was redacted after the Bar Kokhba revolt , Judah could not have included discussion of Hanukkah, which commemorates the Jewish revolt against the Seleucid Empire the Romans would not have tolerated this overt nationalism. Similarly, there were then several decrees in place aimed at suppressing outward signs of national identity, including decrees against wearing tefillin and tzitzit; as conversion to Judaism was against Roman law, Judah would not have discussed this. Mishnah, Gemara, and Talmud[ edit ] Rabbinic commentaries on the Mishnah from the next four centuries, done in the Land of Israel and in Babylonia , were eventually redacted and compiled as well. In themselves they are known as Gemara. The books which set out the Mishnah in its original structure, together with the associated Gemara, are known as Talmuds. Unlike the Hebrew Mishnah, the Gemara is written primarily in Aramaic. Content and purpose[ edit ] The Mishnah teaches the oral traditions by example, presenting actual cases being brought to judgment, usually along with the debate on the matter and the judgment that was given by a notable rabbi based on halakha , mitzvot , and spirit of the teaching "Torah" that guided his decision. In this way, it brings to everyday reality the practice of the mitzvot as presented in the Torah, and aims to cover all aspects of human living, serve as an example for future judgments, and, most important, demonstrate pragmatic exercise of the Biblical laws, which was much needed since the time when the Second Temple was destroyed 70 CE. The Mishnah does not claim to be the development of new laws, but rather the collection of existing traditions. It is thus named for being both the one written authority codex secondary only to the Tanakh as a basis for the passing of judgment, a source and a tool for creating laws, and the first of many books to complement the Tanakh in certain aspects. Oral Torah Before the publication of the Mishnah, Jewish scholarship and judgement were predominantly oral, as according to the Talmud, it was not permitted to write them down. The oral traditions were far from monolithic, and varied among various schools, the most famous of which were the House of Shammai and the House of Hillel. The Rabbis were faced with the new reality of Judaism without a Temple to serve as the

center of teaching and study and Judea without autonomy. It is during this period that Rabbinic discourse began to be recorded in writing. According to the Mevo Hatalmud[ citation needed ] many rulings were given in a specific context, but would be taken out of it; or a ruling was revisited but the second ruling would not become popularly known. To correct this, Judah the Prince took up the redaction of the Mishnah. If a point was of no conflict, he kept its language; where there was conflict, he reordered the opinions and ruled; and he clarified where context was not given. The idea was not to use his own discretion, but rather to examine the tradition as far back as he could, and only supplement as required. The accumulated traditions of the Oral Law, expounded by scholars in each generation from Moses onward, is considered as the necessary basis for the interpretation, and often for the reading, of the Written Law. Jews sometimes refer to this as the Masorah Hebrew: The resulting Jewish law and custom is called halakha. While most discussions in the Mishnah concern the correct way to carry out laws recorded in the Torah, it usually presents its conclusions without explicitly linking them to any scriptural passage, though scriptural quotations do occur. For this reason it is arranged in order of topics rather than in the form of a Biblical commentary. In a very few cases, there is no scriptural source at all and the law is described as Halakha leMoshe miSinai, "law to Moses from Sinai". The Midrash halakha , by contrast, while presenting similar laws, does so in the form of a Biblical commentary and explicitly links its conclusions to details in the Biblical text. These Midrashim often predate the Mishnah. The Mishnah also quotes the Torah for principles not associated with law , but just as practical advice, even at times for humor or as guidance for understanding historical debates. Rejection[ edit ] Some Jews did not accept the codification of the oral law at all. Karaite Judaism , for example, recognised only the Tanakh as authoritative in Halakha Jewish religious law and theology. It vehemently rejected the codification of the Oral Torah in the Mishnah and Talmud and subsequent works of mainstream Rabbinic Judaism which maintained that the Talmud was an authoritative interpretations of the Torah. Karaites maintained that all of the divine commandments handed down to Moses by God were recorded in the written Torah without additional Oral Law or explanation. As a result, Karaite Jews did not accept as binding the written collections of the oral tradition in the Midrash or Talmud. The Karaites comprised a significant portion of the world Jewish population in the 10th and 11th centuries CE, and remain extant, although they currently number in the thousands. Tannaim The rabbis who contributed to the Mishnah are known as the Tannaim, [12] [13] of whom approximately are known. The period during which the Mishnah was assembled spanned about years, or five generations, in the first and second centuries CE. Judah the Prince is credited with the final redaction and publication of the Mishnah, [14] although there have been a few additions since his time: One must also note that in addition to redacting the Mishnah, Judah the Prince and his court also ruled on which opinions should be followed, though the rulings do not always appear in the text. Most of the Mishnah is related without attribution *stam*. This usually indicates that many sages taught so, or that Judah the Prince ruled so. The halakhic ruling usually follows that view. Sometimes, however, it appears to be the opinion of a single sage, and the view of the sages collectively Hebrew: As Judah the Prince went through the tractates, the Mishnah was set forth, but throughout his life some parts were updated as new information came to light. Because of the proliferation of earlier versions, it was deemed too hard to retract anything already released, and therefore a second version of certain laws were released. The Talmud records a tradition that unattributed statements of the law represent the views of Rabbi Meir Sanhedrin 86a , which supports the theory recorded by Sherira Gaon in his famous *Iggeret* that he was the author of an earlier collection. There are also references to the "Mishnah of Rabbi Akiva ", suggesting a still earlier collection; [16] on the other hand, these references may simply mean his teachings in general. Another possibility is that Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Meir established the divisions and order of subjects in the Mishnah, making them the authors of a school curriculum rather than of a book. Authorities are divided on whether Rabbi Judah the Prince recorded the Mishnah in writing or established it as an oral text for memorisation. The most important early account of its composition, the *Iggeret Rav Sherira Gaon* Epistle of Rabbi Sherira Gaon is ambiguous on the point, although the Spanish recension leans to the theory that the Mishnah was written. However, the Talmud records that, in every study session, there was a person called the *tanna* appointed to recite the Mishnah passage under discussion. This may indicate that, even if the Mishnah was reduced to writing, it was not available on general distribution.

This section does not cite any sources. Please help improve this section by adding citations to reliable sources. Unsourced material may be challenged and removed. February Textual variants[ edit ] Very roughly, there are two traditions of Mishnah text. One is found in manuscripts and printed editions of the Mishnah on its own, or as part of the Jerusalem Talmud. The other is found in manuscripts and editions of the Babylonian Talmud ; though there is sometimes a difference between the text of a whole paragraph printed at the beginning of a discussion which may be edited to conform with the text of the Mishnah-only editions and the line-by-line citations in the course of the discussion. Robert Brody, in his *Mishna and Tosefta Studies* Jerusalem , warns against over-simplifying the picture by assuming that the Mishnah-only tradition is always the more authentic, or that it represents a "Palestinian" as against a "Babylonian" tradition. Manuscripts from the Cairo Geniza , or citations in other works, may support either type of reading or other readings altogether. Printed editions[ edit ] The first printed edition of the Mishnah was published in Naples. There have been many subsequent editions, including the late 19th century Vilna edition, which is the basis of the editions now used by the religious public. Vocalized editions were published in Italy, culminating in the edition of David ben Solomon Altaras , publ. The Altaras edition was republished in Mantua in , in Pisa in and and in Livorno in many editions from until These editions show some textual variants by bracketing doubtful words and passages, though they do not attempt detailed textual criticism. The Livorno editions are the basis of the Sephardic tradition for recitation. As well as being printed on its own, the Mishnah is included in all editions of the Babylonian and Jerusalem Talmuds. Each paragraph is printed on its own, and followed by the relevant Gemara discussion. However, that discussion itself often cites the Mishnah line by line. While the text printed in paragraph form has generally been standardized to follow the Vilna edition, the text cited line by line in the Gemara often preserves important variants, which sometimes reflect the readings of older manuscripts. The nearest approach to a critical edition is that of Hanoch Albeck. Oral traditions and pronunciation[ edit ] A traditional setting of the last passage of the first tractate, Berakhot , which describes how scholars of the Talmud create peace in the world. Problems playing this file? The Mishnah was and still is traditionally studied through recitation out loud. Jewish communities around the world preserved local melodies for chanting the Mishnah, and distinctive ways of pronouncing its words. Many medieval manuscripts of the Mishnah are vowelized, and some of these, especially some fragments found in the Genizah , are partially annotated with Tiberian cantillation marks. Otherwise, there is often a customary intonation used in the study of Mishnah or Talmud, somewhat similar to an Arabic mawwal , but this is not reduced to a precise system like that for the Biblical books. In some traditions this intonation is the same as or similar to that used for the Passover Haggadah. Recordings have been made for Israeli national archives, and Frank Alvarez-Pereyre has published a book-length study of the Syrian tradition of Mishnah reading on the basis of these recordings. Most vowelized editions of the Mishnah today reflect standard Ashkenazic vowelization, and often contain mistakes. The Albeck edition of the Mishnah was vowelized by Hanokh Yalon, who made careful eclectic use of both medieval manuscripts and current oral traditions of pronunciation from Jewish communities all over the world. The Albeck edition includes an introduction by Yalon detailing his eclectic method. Two institutes at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem have collected major oral archives which hold among other things extensive recordings of Jews chanting the Mishnah using a variety of melodies and many different kinds of pronunciation. See below for external links. The reason that the Talmud is not usually viewed as a commentary on the Mishnah, is because it also has many other goals, and can get involved in long tangential discussions. However, the main purpose of the Talmud is as a commentary on the Mishnah. In , Maimonides Rambam published a comprehensive commentary on the Mishnah.

## 7: Commentary of the Mishnah – MATANEL

*From AD –, additional commentaries on the Mishnah were compiled and put together as the Gemara. Actually, there are two different versions of the Gemara, one compiled by scholars in Israel (c. AD ) and the other by the scholars of Babylonia (c. AD ). Together, the Mishnah and the Gemara form the Talmud.*

The Mishna is a collection of originally oral laws supplementing scriptural laws. For present-day scholarship, however, Talmud in the precise sense refers only to the materials customarily called Gemara—an Aramaic term prevalent in medieval rabbinic literature that was used by the church censor to replace the term Talmud within the Talmudic discourse in the Basel edition of the Talmud, published – This practice continued in all later editions. On the one hand, it refers to a mode of biblical interpretation prominent in the Talmudic literature; on the other, it refers to a separate body of commentaries on Scripture using this interpretative mode. Opposition to the Talmud Despite the central place of the Talmud in traditional Jewish life and thought, significant Jewish groups and individuals have opposed it vigorously. The Karaite sect in Babylonia, beginning in the 8th century, refuted the oral tradition and denounced the Talmud as a rabbinic fabrication. Medieval Jewish mystics declared the Talmud a mere shell covering the concealed meaning of the written Torah, and heretical messianic sects in the 17th and 18th centuries totally rejected it. The decisive blow to Talmudic authority came in the 18th and 19th centuries when the Haskala the Jewish Enlightenment movement and its aftermath, Reform Judaism , secularized Jewish life and, in doing so, shattered the Talmudic wall that had surrounded the Jews. Thereafter, modernized Jews usually rejected the Talmud as a medieval anachronism , denouncing it as legalistic, casuistic, devitalized, and unspiritual. There is also a long-standing anti-Talmudic tradition among Christians. The Talmud was frequently attacked by the church, particularly during the Middle Ages, and accused of falsifying biblical meaning, thus preventing Jews from becoming Christians. The church held that the Talmud contained blasphemous remarks against Jesus and Christianity and that it preached moral and social bias toward non-Jews. On numerous occasions the Talmud was publicly burned, and permanent Talmudic censorship was established. On the other hand, since the Renaissance there has been a positive response and great interest in rabbinic literature by eminent non-Jewish scholars, writers, and thinkers in the West. As a result, rabbinic ideas, images, and lore, embodied in the Talmud, have permeated Western thought and culture. Content, style, and form The Talmud is first and foremost a legal compilation. At the same time it contains materials that encompass virtually the entire scope of subject matter explored in antiquity. Included are topics as diverse as agriculture, architecture, astrology, astronomy, dream interpretation, ethics , fables, folklore, geography, history, legend , magic, mathematics, medicine, metaphysics , natural sciences, proverbs, theology, and theosophy. This encyclopaedic array is presented in a unique dialectic style that faithfully reflects the spirit of free give-and-take prevalent in the Talmudic academies, where study was focussed upon a Talmudic text. All present participated in an effort to exhaust the meaning and ramifications of the text, debating and arguing together. The mention of a name, situation, or idea often led to the introduction of a story or legend that lightened the mood of a complex argument and carried discussion further. This text-centred approach profoundly affected the thinking and literary style of the rabbis. Study became synonymous with active interpretation rather than with passive absorption. Thinking was stimulated by textual examination. Even original ideas were expressed in the form of textual interpretations. The subject matter of the oral Torah is classified according to its content into Halakha and Haggada and according to its literary form into Midrash and Mishna. The term Midrash denotes the exegetical method by which the oral tradition interprets and elaborates scriptural text. It refers also to the large collections of Halakhic and Haggadic materials that take the form of a running commentary on the Bible and that were deduced from Scripture by this exegetical method. In short, it also refers to a body of writings. Mishna is the comprehensive compendium that presents the legal content of the oral tradition independently of scriptural text. Modes of interpretation and thought Midrash was initially a philological method of interpreting the literal meaning of biblical texts. In time it developed into a sophisticated interpretive system that reconciled apparent biblical contradictions, established the scriptural basis of new laws, and enriched biblical

content with new meaning. Midrashic creativity reached its peak in the schools of Rabbi Ishmael and Akiba , where two different hermeneutic methods were applied. The first was primarily logically oriented, making inferences based upon similarity of content and analogy. The second rested largely upon textual scrutiny, assuming that words and letters that seem superfluous teach something not openly stated in the text. The Talmud treats the Mishna in the same way that Midrash treats Scripture. Contradictions are explained through reinterpretation. New problems are solved logically by analogy or textually by careful scrutiny of verbal superfluity. The strong involvement with hermeneutic exegesis "interpretation according to systematic rules or principles" helped develop the analytic skill and inductive reasoning of the rabbis but inhibited the growth of independent abstract thinking. Bound to a text, they never attempted to formulate their ideas into the type of unified system characteristic of Greek philosophy. Unlike the philosophers, they approached the abstract only by way of the concrete. Events or texts stimulated them to form concepts. These concepts were not defined but, once brought to life, continued to grow and change meaning with usage and in different contexts. The meaning of each concept is dependent upon the total pattern of concepts, for the idea content of each grows richer as it interweaves with the others. They linked the oral tradition to Scripture, transmitting it as a running commentary on the Bible. For almost years they applied the Torah to changing circumstances, making it a living law. By the end of this period, rabbinic Judaism "the religious system constructed by the scribes and rabbis" was strong enough to withstand pressure from without and mature enough to permit internal diversity of opinion. At the beginning of the 2nd century bce, a judicial body headed by the zugot "pairs of scholars" assumed Halakhic authority. There were five pairs in all, between c. The first of the zugot also introduced the Mishnaic style of transmitting the oral tradition. The making of the Mishna: This era, distinguished by a continuous attempt to consolidate the fragmentary Midrashic and Mishnaic material, culminated in the compilation of the Mishna at the beginning of the 3rd century ce. The work was carried out in the academies of Hillel and Shammai and in others founded later. Most scholars believe that Halakhic collections existed prior to the fall of Jerusalem, in 70 ce. Other compilations were made at Yavne , a Palestinian town near the Mediterranean, as part of the effort to revitalize Judaism after the disaster of 70 ce. By the beginning of the 2nd century there were many such collections. Tradition has it that Rabbi Akiba organized much of this material into separate collections of Midrash, Mishna, and Haggada and introduced the formal divisions in tannaitic literature. His students and other scholars organized new compilations that were studied in the different academies. After the rebellion of the Jews against Roman rule led by Simeon bar Kokhba in " , when the Sanhedrin the Jewish supreme court and highest academy was revived, the Mishnaic compilation adopted by the Sanhedrin president became the official Mishna. The Sanhedrin reached its highest stature under the leadership of Judah ha-Nasi Judah the Prince, or President ; he was also called Rabbi, as the preeminent teacher. It seems certain that the official Mishna studied during his presidency was the Mishna we know and that he was its editor. Judah aimed to include the entire content of the oral tradition. Nevertheless, the accumulation was such that selection was necessary. Thus almost no Midrash or Haggada was included. Midrashic material was gathered in separate compilations, and later revisions of some of these are still extant. The language of all of the tannaitic literature is the new Hebrew developed during the period of the Second Temple c. The making of the Talmuds: Both take the form of a running commentary on the Mishna. The foundations for these two monumental works were begun by three disciples of Judah ha-Nasi: Centres of learning where the Mishna was expounded existed also at Sepphoris, Caesarea, and Lydda in Palestine. In time new academies were established in Babylonia, the best known being those at Pumbedita, Mahoza and Naresh, founded by Judah bar Ezekiel, Rava, and Rav Pappa, respectively. The enrollment of these centres often numbered in the thousands, and students spent many years there. Those who no longer lived on the academy grounds returned twice annually for the kalla, a month of study in the spring and fall. Academies differed in their methods of study. Pumbedita, for example, stressed casuistry, while Sura emphasized breadth of knowledge. Students often moved from one academy to another and even from Palestine to Babylonia or from Babylonia to Palestine. This kept open the channels of communication between the various academies and resulted in the inclusion of much Babylonian material in the Palestinian Talmud , and vice versa. Despite the overwhelming similarity of the two Talmuds, however, they do differ in some ways. The former is invariably

shorter, and, not having been subject to final redaction, its discussions are often incomplete. Its explanations tend to remain closer to the literal meaning of the Mishna, preferring textual emendation to casuistic interpretation. Finally, some of the legal concepts in the Babylonian Talmud reflect the influence of Persian law, for Babylonia was under Persian rule at the time. The main endeavour of the amoraim was to thoroughly explain and exhaust the meaning of the Mishna and the Baraitot. Apparent contradictions were reconciled by such means as explaining that conflicting statements referred to different situations or by asserting that they stemmed from the Mishnayot Mishnas of different tannaim. The same techniques were used when amoraic statements contradicted the Mishna. These discussions took place for hundreds of years, and their content was passed on from generation to generation, until the compilation of the Talmud. The remainder was completed in Tiberias some 50 years later. It seems likely that its compilation was a rescue operation designed to preserve as much of the Halakhic material collected in Palestinian academies as possible, for by that time the deterioration of the political situation had forced most Palestinian scholars to emigrate to Babylonia. The Babylonian Talmud was compiled up to the 6th century. Some scholars suggest that the organization of the Talmud began early and that successive generations of amoraim added layer upon layer to previously arranged material. Others suggest that at the beginning a stratum called Gemara, consisting only of Halakhic decisions or short comments, was set forth. Still others theorize that no overall arrangement of Talmudic material was made until the end of the 4th century. But the extent of their contribution is not precisely known. Some attribute to them only short additions. Others credit them with creating the terminology linking the phases of Talmudic discussions. According to another view, they added comments and often decided between conflicting opinions. The proponents of the so-called Gemara theory noted above ascribe to them the entire dialectic portion of Talmudic discourse. Talmudic and Midrashic literature Mishna The Mishna is divided into six orders sedarim , each order into tractates massekhtot , and each tractate into chapters peraqim. It includes prohibitions against mixtures in plants hybridization , legislation relating to the sabbatical year when land lies fallow and debts are remitted , and regulations concerning the portions of harvest given to the poor, the Levites, and the priests. This order deals with ceremonies, rituals, observances, and prohibitions relating to special days of the year, including the Sabbath, holidays, and fast days.

**8: MISHNAH - [www.enganchecubano.com](http://www.enganchecubano.com)**

*What is the Mishnah? The Mishnah is the written form of what Orthodox Jews consider oral explanations of the Jewish Law that God gave to Moses. When Moses was on Mt. Sinai, God gave him the law He wished the Israelites to follow.*

Yosef ben Haggi It was the custom in ancient libraries to recognise the title and contents of a book by the first few words of that book at the beginning of said scroll. This technique will become clearer after we make sense of every word contained in these two initial verses. This term may refer to the initiation of a series of historical events Gen. Difficult usages of the term occur in several passages. But this seems redundant, since we expect that a story or narrative starts with the beginning. Thus, a proper reading of this sentence should be: This is in perfect consonance with the similar reading in Psalm The Torah which is the Law book of Israel should have commenced with the verse Exod. What is the reason, then, that it commences with the account of the Creation? Because of the thought expressed in the text Ps. He gave an account of the work of Creation , in order that He might give them the heritage of the nations. God created the world for the sake of the Torah which is called Prov. From this rather large list of sayings and teachings Mordechai Mark as the scribe of Hakham Tsefet chose those teachings or occurrences that best fit the central subject his treatise which was issued for instructional purposes following the Septennial Torah cycle of readings, rather than a short biography of His Majesty as is posited by most Christian theologians. That is, every major point of the Good News set forth in the New Covenant with Israel is spoken of or prophesied in the Hebrew Scriptures. The Akkadian bears this out, for the word is largely neutral there. Yochanan " see editorial footnotes on Shabbat a in the English translation of the Soncino Talmud. This is reflected in the rhetoric for example, of the anti-Semite Friedrich Kittel [6] in his article in the Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, where he states: The pun is possible only in respect of the Greek. On the other hand the passage does not prove what has been deduced from it. Palestinian Judaism was bilingual. Aramaic might be spoken, but Greek was understood. In the Synoptics it is found in the mouth of Jesus at the beginning of his ministry: So, where does this leave us? James Trimm in his commentary on the so called Epistle to the Hebrews [8] leaves very conveniently this key passage unexplained. To do this let us look at the clauses: However, such interpretation depends on an illegitimate straight-jacket approach imposed by Christian Theology and not justified by the text. Delitzsch [10] schooled evidently on a diet of Replacement Theology proposes that the text should read: This replacement theology view is reflected in the RSV translation of this verse: This view for example is found in the rendition of this verse by the Catholic New Jerusalem Bible which puts it: But the word of hearing did not profit them, not being mixed with faith of those things they heard. And the answer of course is a resounding YES! The answer of course is a resounding YES! And any Jewish Orthodox child will direct one to Pirque Abot 1: In other words, the second clause of this pasuk acts as a circumstantial clause subject to the first clause and which object is twofold. Now, note that in Pirque Abot 1: And this Word is the Good News that has been brought to you. Therefore this verse is much better translated from a Rabbinical perspective as: Thirdly, we have here the Oral Torah Greek: Then I saw another angel, flying high overhead, sent to announce the gospel of eternity to all who live on the earth, every nation, race, language and tribe. He was calling, "Fear God and glorify him, because the time has come for him to sit in judgement; worship the maker of heaven and earth and sea and the springs of water. Note that works and faith go hand in hand Romans 3: Verse 13 is a reassurance when any believer dies. They were attracted to the nobility of Jewish worship and to the truth of the one G-d Who had revealed Himself in the Bible, but for various reasons did not become Jews. And have we not established above in 1 Tsefet Peter 1: The transmitted Oral Torah Heb. Or, simply put, the Oral Torah prevents the Written Torah from it being misunderstood or misused as well as protecting its practitioners from serious breaches of the Written Torah or even deviating from the Torah. And the Catholic New Jerusalem Bible translates this passage: I want to make quite clear to you, brothers, what the message of the gospel that I preached to you is; you accepted it and took your stand on it, 2. The tradition I handed on to you in the first place, a tradition which I had myself received, was that Christ died for our sins, in accordance with the scriptures, 4. To answer this question we need to think of a more sinister scenario, one which combines pagan

mythology with Biblical terms. Thus we have a clever substitution which allowed them to anchor their pagan religion and concepts camouflaged in respectable Biblical terminology. What is new under the sun?

**9: TALMUD COMMENTARIES - [www.enganchecubano.com](http://www.enganchecubano.com)**

*Saadia Gaon is said to have composed commentaries on the Talmud, aside from his Arabic commentaries on the Mishnah (Benjacob, "Oá"ar ha-Sefarim," p. , No. ). According to the Karaite Solomon b.*

Common sense suggests that some sort of oral tradition was always needed to accompany the Written Law, because the Torah alone, even with its commandments, is an insufficient guide to Jewish life. For example, the fourth of the Ten Commandments, ordains, "Remember the Sabbath day to make it holy" Exodus Would merely refraining from these few activities fulfill the biblical command to make the Sabbath holy? Indeed, the Sabbath rituals that are most commonly associated with holiness—lighting of candles, reciting the kiddush, and the reading of the weekly Torah portion—are found not in the Torah, but in the Oral Law. And you shall teach them diligently to your children, and you shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk on the road, when you lie down and when you rise up. And you shall bind them for a sign upon your hand, and they shall be for frontlets between your eyes. Only in the Oral Law do we learn that what a Jewish male should bind upon his hand and between his eyes are tefillin phylacteries. Finally, an Oral Law was needed to mitigate certain categorical Torah laws that would have caused grave problems if carried out literally. The Written Law, for example, demands an "eye for an eye" Exodus Did this imply that if one person accidentally blinded another, he should be blinded in return? But the Oral Law explains that the verse must be understood as requiring monetary compensation: Well over a million Jews were killed in the two ill-fated uprisings, and the leading yeshivot, along with thousands of their rabbinical scholars and students, were devastated. Teaching the law orally, the rabbis knew, compelled students to maintain close relationships with teachers, and they considered teachers, not books, to be the best conveyors of the Jewish tradition. But with the deaths of so many teachers in the failed revolts, Rabbi Judah apparently feared that the Oral Law would be forgotten unless it were written down. In the Mishna, the name for the sixty-three tractates in which Rabbi Judah set down the Oral Law, Jewish law is systematically codified, unlike in the Torah. For example, if a person wanted to find every law in the Torah about the Sabbath, he would have to locate scattered references in Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers. Indeed, in order to know everything the Torah said on a given subject, one either had to read through all of it or know its contents by heart. Rabbi Judah avoided this problem by arranging the Mishna topically. All laws pertaining to the Sabbath were put into one tractate called Shabbat Hebrew for "Sabbath". It records laws concerning different blessings and when they are to be recited. Another order, called Nezikin Damages, contains ten tractates summarizing Jewish civil and criminal law. Another order, Nashim Women, deals with issues between the sexes, including both laws of marriage, Kiddushin, and of divorce, Gittin. A fifth order, Kodashim, outlines the laws of sacrifices and ritual slaughter. The sixth order, Taharot, contains the laws of purity and impurity. Although parts of the Mishna read as dry legal recitations, Rabbi Judah frequently enlivened the text by presenting minority views, which it was also hoped might serve to guide scholars in later generations. Mishna Eduyot 1: In one famous instance, the legal code turned almost poetic, as Rabbi Judah cited the lengthy warning the rabbinic judges delivered to witnesses testifying in capital cases: In case you may want to offer testimony that is only conjecture or hearsay or secondhand evidence, even from a person you consider trustworthy; or in the event you do not know that we shall test you by cross-examination and inquiry, then know that capital cases are not like monetary cases. For thus we find in the case of Cain, who killed his brother, that it is written: Therefore was the first man, Adam, created alone, to teach us that whoever destroys a single life, the Bible considers it as if he destroyed an entire world. And whoever saves a single life, the Bible considers it as if he saved an entire world. Also, man [was created singly] to show the greatness of the Holy One, Blessed be He, for if a man strikes many coins from one mold, they all resemble one another, but the King of Kings, the Holy One, Blessed be He, made each man in the image of Adam, and yet not one of them resembles his fellow. One commentary notes, "How grave the responsibility, therefore, of corrupting myself by giving false evidence, and thus bringing [upon myself the moral guilt of [murdering] a whole world. The rabbis of Palestine edited their discussions of the Mishna about the year More than a century later, some of the leading Babylonian rabbis compiled another editing of the discussions on the

Mishna. By then, these deliberations had been going on some three hundred years. The Babylon edition was far more extensive than its Palestinian counterpart, so that the Babylonian Talmud Talmud Bavli became the most authoritative compilation of the Oral Law. When people speak of studying "the Talmud," they almost invariably mean the Bavli rather than the Yerushalmi. A law from the Mishna is cited, which is followed by rabbinic deliberations on its meaning. The Mishna and the rabbinic discussions known as the Gemara comprise the Talmud, although in Jewish life the terms Gemara and Talmud usually are used interchangeably. In addition to extensive legal discussions in Hebrew, halakha , the rabbis incorporated into the Talmud guidance on ethical matters, medical advice, historical information, and folklore, which together are known as aggadata. For example, Mishna Bava Mezia 7: The case in question is where the employer gave them a higher wage than was normal. Yet throughout Jewish history, study of the Mishna and Talmud was hardly restricted to an intellectual elite. That the men who chopped wood in Berditchev, an arduous job that required no literacy, met regularly to study Jewish law demonstrates the ongoing pervasiveness of study of the Oral Law in the Jewish community. William Morrow and Co. Reprinted by permission of the author.

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